



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

**North Carolina Board of Transportation
Environmental Planning and Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2003**

A meeting of the Environmental Planning and Policy Committee (EPPC) was held on March 5, 2003 at 8:00 AM in the Board Room (Room 150) of the Transportation Building. Nina Szlosberg chaired the meeting. Other Board of Transportation members that attended were:

Tom Betts	Nina Szlosberg
Marion Cowell	Alan Thornburg
Nancy Dunn	Lanny Wilson
Doug Galyon	Marvin Blount III

Other attendees included:

Craig Deal	David King	Benton Payne
Janet D'Ignazio	Neil Lassiter	Allen Pope
Catherine Dunn	Don Lee	Ruth Sappie
Cherie Gibson	Sharon Lipscomb	Roger Sheats
Lisa Glover	Robin M. Little	Roy Shelton
Gail Grimes	Carl McCann	Jay Swain
Rob Hanson	Ehren Meister	Greg Thorpe
Phil Harris	Beau Mills	Sec. Lyndo Tippet
Julie Hunkins	Mike Mills	Jim Trogdon
David Hyder	Jon Nance	Don Voelker
Pat Ivey	Sandy Nance	Steve Wall
Berry Jenkins	Meg Ryan O'Donnell	Ron Watson
Sherri Creech-Johnson	Ken Pace	Marcus Wilner

Ms. Szlosberg called the meeting to order. The meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Ms. Szlosberg welcomed two new board members to the committee, Tom Betts and Marvin Blount.

Ms. Szlosberg opened the meeting by noting that supporting the Governor's agenda is one of the top priorities of the department and using all of the tools possible to improve air quality is essential. One of the priorities established was the Smart Growth Commission. Following the work of the commission, a series of recommendations was formalized. Ms Szlosberg introduced Meg Ryan O'Donnell, President of Winning

Strategies and Beau Mills, Director of the North Carolina Metropolitan Coalition, to present several of the recommendations, including those from the transportation subcommittee.

Ms. Meg Ryan O'Donnell's presentation focused on the findings of the Smart Growth Commission. The growth and economic development of the 1990's was overwhelming and the commission was really interested in finding ways to control some of the negative affects of this growth and development. The Commission was lead by Senator Howard Lee and Representative Joe Hackney. The new challenge was because of the increase in a diverse population migrating into urban areas and the government services that must be kept at a high service level, such as education and transportation needs. The Commission was composed of a diverse group of 37 community members. Specifically, the Commission's charge was to study and promote ways in which the state can help communities grow, to protect our economic vitality, protect our natural resources, enhance our quality of life, and most important, spend our tax dollars effectively and efficiently. The Commission's job was not to stop or even hinder growth.

The Commission was broken into four work groups: community and downtown vitality; farm and open space preservation; regional partnerships; and transportation. These groups allowed for more participants and experts to participate in discussions and debates. An important part of the Commission and the individual work groups was an educational component that included tours and presentations throughout the state. At the conclusion of the Commission's work, the Commission articulated an approach to growth, including the development of eight overarching goals:

1. Promote smart growth planning in all counties and municipalities
2. Provide resources to support smart growth planning in all counties and municipalities
3. Enhance the smart growth tool box at the local level
4. Ensure coordination of local plans and decisions with neighboring localities and with regional strategies
5. Strengthen coordination and cooperation among planning entities operating on a regional basis
6. Develop a state smart growth framework
7. Ensure consistent oversight of state decisions related to smart growth
8. Ensure state decisions respect local and regional planning decisions

The final report was provided to each Board Member and explains the Commission's approach to dealing with Smart Growth issues and the recommendations outlined from all work groups, including those of the Transportation Work Group. Ms. O'Donnell introduced Beau Mills to present the Transportation Work Group recommendations.

Mr. Mills opened his presentation by acknowledging Harrison Marshall, Janet D'Ignazio, and Roger Sheats, who all played valuable roles with the Commission and Transportation Work Group. He noted the two guiding principles of the work group and elaborated on the recognized importance of the interdependency of land use and transportation decisions. Mr. Mills summarized the six goals that were established by the Transportation Work Group:

- Improve land use and transportation linkages
- Ensure connections and consistency between land use, economic development, transportation and infrastructure plans at local, regional and state levels

- Encourage cooperation and coordination of land use and transportation with information, resources and money
- Provide a toolbox for local governments that meet smart growth planning thresholds
- Assess projected impacts of land use and development decision on transportation up-front and before approval of a development
- Access management and right-of-way policies and practices should (1) complement land use plans in both planned growth and sensitive areas and (2) be coordinated by NCDOT and local government
- Create an interagency program for coordinated land use, transportation and air quality modeling and planning
- Protect rights-of-way for rail and road corridors through close coordination between NCDOT and local governments

Board Member Nancy Dunn asked Ms. D'Ignazio how these recommendations have been incorporated into NCDOT's practices. Ms. D'Ignazio responded that NCDOT reviewed the recommended goals and divided them into potential policy changes, legislative changes and administrative changes. She noted that it might be appropriate to present at a future committee meeting some of the changes that have been implemented and some of the outstanding issues that may require legislative or further change. Ms. Szlosberg noted that the committee should mark any items that the EPPC may want to look at further as legislative agenda items.

Board Member Lanny Wilson elaborated on the importance of Goal 1.7 in the report dealing with rail and road right-of-way corridors. A major problem is occurring because these corridors aren't being preserved properly. Ms. Dunn noted that a subcommittee on working on planning issues is discussing many of these same issues and will be providing a report to committee in the near future.

Mr. Mills noted that the Transportation Work Group was lead by Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory and Representative Drew Saunders. The next goal developed by the Transportation Work Group was to focus on transportation investments. Strategies identified included:

- A balanced maintenance program that requires phased in equal footing for maintenance verses new capacity, required maintenance standards and commensurate funds, and budget maintenance costs in project development phase
- Focus transportation investments in planned growth areas and provide funds to locals for collector network planning
- Most capital investments should be contingent on having basic land use plans in place and that all state agencies honor those plans to the maximum extent, using mediation as last resort in disputes with local governments
- Develop clear project selection criteria and an open, transparent process to ensure consistent and comprehensible programming
- State transportation monies should be flexible and eligible for all modes
- Regional funding boundaries coordinated with regional planning boundaries that plans can be better coordinated, prioritized and budgeted
- Create a "state multi-modal transportation fund" dedicated only to projects that target congestion and air quality improvements

- Safety, community and environmental concerns, air quality, and traffic congestion must be part of the Equity Formula

Ms. Szlosberg and Ms. D'Ignazio noted that legislation was passed that changed a "land use plan" to a "land development plan." NCDOT provides support when needed to develop local transportation plans. Board Member Alan Thornburg noted that Asheville doesn't have much of a land use plan but they are able to do enough planning in order to be granted transportation funding.

Ms. Dunn noted that the funding boundaries being coordinated with regional planning boundaries seems very different from how NCDOT currently operates. Ms. D'Ignazio noted that this would be a legislative issue because state and federal law sets the boundaries. Ms. Szlosberg elaborated on the state multi-modal transportation fund goal and its importance and relevance to air quality concerns.

Board Member Marion Cowell asked what the status of the Transportation Work Group and Commission is and whether they continue to work? Mr. Mills responded that the Commission has completed its work and no longer exists in a formal sense. Mr. Cowell asked who is responsible for implementing the recommendations being presented? Mr. Mills noted that there was follow up legislation that was passed that created a standing committee on smart growth; however, he is unaware of its status. Mr. Cowell noted that all of the recommendations are great goals and he fully supports the governor. He further inquired as to what has been done with the report and its recommendations. Ms. O'Donnell responded that members of the Commission are slowly beginning to reconvene with meetings scheduled. She responded that the reality over the last two years is that the economic and budget concerns within the state have taken a priority over implementation of the Commission's recommendations and other statewide initiatives. However, as noted in Governor Easley's State Address -- we are moving forward. Therefore, the report will be re-energized and taken back to state agencies and the public for serious discussion. The report is still very relevant and continues to be important.

Ms. Szlosberg noted that many of these recommendations could be easily implemented internally at state agencies. Mr. Cowell noted that some kind of overall coordination should be used in the implementation. Mr. Roger Sheats noted that the Board and Environmental Planning and Policy Committee have the potential to implement recommendations and positively affect policy. Ms. Szlosberg noted that there are various ways we can implement the recommendations and goals. Mr. Sheats noted the importance and relevance of the meetings that have occurred between the secretaries of agencies involved in many of the Commission's recommendations.

Another goal of the Transportation Work Group was the development of multi-modal transportation systems. Strategies associated with this goal included:

- Require all new road and highway projects to include needs assessment for current and future HOV, transit, park and ride, pedestrian, bike, etc. in the planning and reflect this in the design and construction
- Assess needs and develop multi-modal center or facilities for every county
- Improve, integrate and expand inter and intra regional transportation modes, including bus and rail as appropriate
- Promote multi-modal needs in subdivision design standards
- Encourage shared access to freight rail right-of-way for passenger and commuter rail

The next goal Mr. Mills outlined was to ensure transportation system interconnectivity. Ways this can be accomplished include:

- Ensure that interstate highway system goals are sufficiently flexible to meet the diverse needs and desires of North Carolina's regions, both urban and rural
- Assist local governments in an effort to incorporate collector streets into the transportation planning process to accommodate planned growth areas for urban and suburban transportation

Mr. Mills described the fifth goals, which is to encourage regionalism, regional transportation planning and solutions. Strategies include:

- Encourage consolidation of existing regional agencies into one agency per metropolitan area to create a single land use, infrastructure and transportation planning entity
- Coordinate boundaries so that transportation planning regions and air quality attainment areas are the same

Ms. Dunn noted that air quality conformity has helped drive this issue.

The final goal recommended by the Transportation Work Group was to emphasize public involvement in transportation decision-making. The one strategy Mr. Mills reviewed was to improve communication through early continuous involvement to help develop a clear community vision and to lead to faster implementation of better projects. Mr. Mills noted that this is an area that the department has already made great strides in achieving.

In closing, Mr. Mills noted that there is a lot of information contained in the report. Many organizations are looking to NCDOT and the Board of Transportation to be a leader with these issues and the department has the potential to address some very key areas.

In closing, Ms. Szlosberg thanked the presenters and noted that the next question to address is what to do with all of this information and how to move forward. She suggested that the EPPC look at implementation strategies for some of the key recommendations noted throughout the presentation. Ms. Dunn agreed that this should be kept on the Board's agenda and that it will be appropriate to coordinate with the subcommittee working on planning issues. Ms. Szlosberg suggested the possibility of a facilitated effort in order to structure plans for moving this issue forward. She further noted that the committee members should review the report and make a note of the recommendations that are of most interest to them and that may require further discussion.

Ms. Szlosberg accepted a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 AM.

The next meeting for the Environmental Planning and Policy Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, 2003 at 8:00 AM in the Board Room (Room 150) of the Transportation Building.

NS/edm